

Ashland University

From the Selected Works of Oscar T McKnight Ph.D.

2002

Planning and Assessing a Short-Term Study Abroad Program for Undergraduate Students of Marketing and Business

Ronald Paugh, *Ashland University*

Amy Kruse, *Ashland University*

Oscar T McKnight, *Ashland University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/oscar_mcknight/28/

PLANNING AND ASSESSING A SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF MARKETING AND BUSINESS

Ronald Rough, Ashland University

Amy Kruse, Ashland University,

Oscar McKnight, Ashland University

ABSTRACT

Faced with intense global competition, marketing practitioners are requiring business schools to equip students, with the requisite international skills and competencies. The authors describe a short-term study-abroad program rooted in an experiential learning context, using outcomes-based education as a method of assessment for continuous improvement initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S economy is facing heightened global competition in the new millennium. Close to one-third of U.S. corporations conduct international business and more than 80 percent of U.S. goods and services compete against foreign companies (Skousen and Bertelsen 1994). Many factors have contributed to this trend, including the fall of communism and trade liberalization policies in developing economics like Mexico, Malaysia and India (Tyagi 2001).

Recently, university officials have been responding to the demands of the marketplace by placing a higher priority on the internationalization of their curriculum (Albers-Miller, Crenshaw, and Straughan 1999-1 Arson, Folks Jr., and Kwok 1993). Another impetus for the creation of such programs has emanated from The American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) mandate for a greater degree of globalization in business programs (Lundstrom, White, and Schuster 1996).

Given that internationalization initiatives are developed within the context of each college or university's mission, they will vary in direction, focus, and intensity. The purpose of this paper is to describe the creation and implementation of a short-term study-abroad program based on a review of the relevant literature and first-hand experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary purpose of this research is to develop a short-term study-abroad course appropriate

for undergraduate students of business and marketing. A review of the pertinent literature in the marketing education discipline uncovered three significant trends: 1) internationalization of the business and marketing curriculum- 2) experiential learning in an international context', and 3) outcomes-based education as a method of assessment for continuous improvement.

A large number of schools have increased their efforts to internationalize the marketing curricula in the last ten years (Tyagi 2001). Different levels of commitment can be identified that help guide these internationalization efforts. They include global awareness, global understanding, and global competence. According to Arpan, Folks, Jr., and Kwok (1993) there are four primary approaches to business and marketing curriculum internationalization, corresponding generally to these three levels of commitment, Table I highlights these approaches.

Experiential learning is one method that allows students to become active participants in the educational process. According to Wynd (1989), teaching methods that actively engage students will enhance learning and development. Therefore, experiential learning has been used as a mechanism to internationalize the marketing curricula (Toncar and Cudmore 2000). Although they -vary widely, most international experiential learning programs can be placed into one of three categories: 1.) foreign study tours-, 2.) short-duration internships (less than a fall semester), and 3.) long-duration internships (a semester or longer).

TABLE 1

Four Approaches To Internationalize Business And Marketing Curriculum

Approach	Description/Commitment
Infusion/Integration	Inserts international topics, perspectives into existing business and marketing courses; Awareness
General/Survey International Business Course	Requires one general international business course; Awareness and Understanding
Specialized International Business Courses	Requires specialized courses in functional business fields; Awareness and Understanding
Internationally Oriented Non-Business Courses	Requires non-business, interdisciplinary courses; Awareness, Understanding and Competence

Note: Adapted from: Tyagi (2001), "Internationalization of Marketing Education: Current Status and Future Challenges"; Turley and Shannon (1999), "The International Marketing Curriculum: Views From Students"; Arpan, Folks, Jr. and Kwok (1993), *International Business Education In The 1990's: A Global Survey*.

Foreign study tours provide some combination of lecture, guest speakers, company visits, field trips, and projects and involve an overseas study of between 2 and 4 weeks. Foreign study tours have been used by business faculty since at least 1969 (Moncrief, Shipp, and Lamb 1995). Internships are an increasingly popular experiential learning method in marketing. They combine a hands-on, learning-by-doing work experience and afford students the opportunity to integrate theory and practice (Toncar and Cudmore 2000). Programs of this nature are an effective way to internationalize the marketing curriculum and to combine business education with cultural enrichment and appreciation (Cann 2000).

Outcomes-based education is a concept rooted in continuous improvement initiatives. It is a paradigm that presupposes that goals, or desired outcomes, should drive the entire effort of the educational organization. Emphasis is placed on developing desired outcomes that are measurable, setting standards of achievement on these outcomes, and using measurements of the outcomes to aid in continuous improvement efforts (Martin, Kimball, and Bush 1998).

In an attempt to assess student performance and the subsequent impact of the course on student attitudes and behaviors, the goals for internationalization must be identified (Schuster, Zimmerman, Schertzer, and Beamish 1998; Gordon and Smith 1992). Several frameworks have been proposed in the outcomes-based literature. Cellich (1993) categorized international learning into the three areas of technical knowledge, analytical skills, and cultural sensitivity. Daniels (1993) delineated

training into two areas called content and process. Content includes issues, descriptions, and theories specific to international studies, whereas process focuses on techniques that facilitate the perception, acceptance, or adjustment to differences. Arpan's (1993) scheme identified the three goals for international education to be focused on awareness, understanding, and competency. The first goal is an awareness of how the national economy is related to the global economy. The second goal includes understanding the basis of and primary issues associated with international business. This higher level of learning also focuses on economic growth issues, standards of living, and understanding how global competition impacts a particular functional area of business. The third goal, competency, transforms understanding into action, and genuine competency can be gained only through personal, on-site experiences.

The framework adapted in this paper is similar to those discussed above but is more generic in nature. It is an adaptation of the Schuster, et. al. (1998) framework, which identified three learning domains. The first, the cognitive domain, relates to the transfer of knowledge; second, the affective domain, relates to attitude change; third, the behavioral domain, relates to skills and personal competency acquisition. In assessing these learning outcomes, it is necessary to define the goals or objectives of the specific course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The professional marketing community expects business school graduates to possess the necessary requisite skills to compete in the global

economy. The greatest needs, as identified by practitioners, include the ability to assess market potential, world business knowledge, an understanding of cultural differences, and language fluency in oral communications. In addition, students should be capable of performing strategic global planning and analysis (Lundstrom, White, and Schuster 1996). Given this, four fundamental course objectives are defined:

- 1.) Help the student to develop, through research, a process of learning about new cultures and places, and to provide an opportunity to apply what he or she has learned;
- 2.) Help the student to gain a more in-depth knowledge of an area or culture;
- 3.) Develop an appreciation of the impact of cultural, economic, political, and regulatory forces on international marketing strategy; and
- 4.) Formulate a strategic marketing plan for a specific organization, which includes an assessment of market potential, and trends among selected target markets, a market entry approach, and marketing mix alternatives.

COURSE DESIGN

The course is predicated upon Brokaw's 1996 model, which combines a home campus research class with an intensive cultural immersion experience. For clarification, one international destination is selected and students remain in that location for as long as two weeks. The instructional components of the course include four activities: 1) Presentations by business, academic, and government officials; 2) Visits to companies and government agencies; 3) Informational social gatherings with business and government officials; and 4) Cultural tours. The course also includes several pre-trip activities. Gordon and Smith (1992) and Brokaw (1996) provide many useful examples, which can be placed into three categories.

Category 1: Historical Research

Identify one of the oldest sites in the city. Research its historical significance in economic, sociological, or cultural terms. Major neighborhoods or sections of the city can be researched. Determine what role the area plays as part of the region's greater economy. And finally, the student can identify one site of interest based on its relevance to either U.S. culture or history in general or to the student specifically. Several Web sites are available to help the student get started in the research process. Table 2 lists some useful sites specific to the London area.

TABLE 2
Useful Web Sites: London Area

World Wide Web Address	Description	Date Accessed
http://www.travel.org	Guides to London; Tourist attractions, tips, and background information.	7/09/01
http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/london	Information on culture, history, environment; Area maps.	8/21/01
http://www.britannia.com	London guides, directories, activities, history, and resources.	8/21/01
http://www.istc.org	Destination information, latest news, travel packets, and background on the country specifically designed for students traveling abroad.	7/12/01
http://www.fodors.com	Overview of the city, history, trends, businesses and virtual tours.	8/19/01
http://www.state.gov/www/services.html	Travel, business, educational, and historical information.	7/18/01

TABLE 3

Pre- And Post-Test Questionnaire
Cognitive Learning Domain

1.) The European Community is said to have begun with the Treaty of Rome. In which year was the Treaty of Rome signed?
a.) 1945
b.) 1957
c.) 1919
d.) 1968
e.) none of the above
2.) Which of the following countries is not part of the European Community?
a.) Portugal
b.) Denmark
c.) Greece
d.) Switzerland
e.) All of the above are members
3.) Who is the Prime Minister of England?
a.) Margaret Thatcher
b.) Tony Blair
c.) Neil Kinnocky
d.) John Major
e.) Robert White
4.) Who is the current President of the European Commission?
a.) Francois Mitterand
b.) Jacques Delor
c.) Romano Prodi
d.) John Major
e.) Neil Kinnocky
5.) Which of the following would be appropriate behavior when being introduced to a European businessperson?
a.) Shake hands, say "Good morning/afternoon," exchange cards, put the card in a safe place.
b.) Shake hands, say "What a wonderful city this is," exchange cards, and write notes on it to remember this person.
c.) Shake hands, exchange names/cards, say "It's very nice to meet you (and add the person's last name and/or title)."
d.) Shake hands, exchange names/cards, say "It's nice to meet you (add the person's first name). This is a wonderful city."
e.) Shake hands, exchange cards with two hands, wait for the other person to greet you, say "It's nice to meet you."

Note: Adapted from: Schuster, Zimmerman, Schertzer and Beamish (1998), "Assessing the Impact of Executive MBA International Travel Courses".

Category 2: Business Related Research

Select two types of firms that are of interest to the student. One firm must be U.S. based and preferably near campus. The second firm must be

from, or near, the travel destination. The firms must be international in scope, with market representation in the U. S. market and the market of the country to be visited.

TABLE 4

Pre- And Post-Test Questionnaire
Affective Learning Domain

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.) Entering a foreign market to do business is very difficult.					
2.) Trade barriers established by the European Community will make it almost impossible to enter the market after 1992.					
3.) Understanding the culture of a country is important for success in business.					
4.) Speaking the official language of a country is important for success in business.					
5.) Studying abroad is an integral part of learning about international business.					
6.) Negotiating with businesspeople in the U.S. is very similar to negotiating with businesspeople in other countries.					
7.) The U.S. may rank behind the European Community in economic power by the year 2010.					
8.) Management practices are fundamentally the same around the world.					
9.) Doing business with people from Europe makes me uncomfortable.					
10.) The general argumentativeness of the Europeans is a style used to mask the importance of specific issues.					
11.) Discussions of historical events intimidate non-European businesspeople and are used to point out a lack of knowledge or culture.					
12.) Reading books is an appropriate way to learn how to do business in Europe.					
13.) Informal behavior is appropriate for doing business in Europe.					
14.) Talking to European businesspeople and/or academics is an appropriate way to learn how to do business in Europe.					
15.) Talking to U.S. businesspeople and/or academics with experience in Europe is an appropriate way to learn how to do business in Europe.					
16.) Knowing the culture of one European country is sufficient for developing business practices suitable throughout the European Community.					

Note: Adapted from: Schuster, Zimmerman, Schertzer and Beamish (1998), "Assessing the Impact of Executive MBA International Travel Courses".

TABLE 5

Pre- And Post-Test Questionnaire
Behavioral Learning Domain
Personal Growth Assessment

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Autonomy					
1.) I am self-determining and independent.					
2.) I am able to resist social pressures to think and act in certain ways.					
3.) I evaluate myself by personal standards.					
Environmental Mastery					
4.) I have a sense of mastery and competence in managing the environment.					
5.) I make effective use of surrounding opportunities.					
6.) I am able to choose or create contexts suitable to personal needs and values.					
Personal Growth					
7.) I have feelings of continued development.					
8.) I see myself as growing and expanding.					
9.) I am open to new experiences.					
10.) I have a sense of realizing my own potential.					
11.) I see improvement in myself and behavior over time.					
Proactivity					
12.) I take initiative to solve my own problems.					
13.) I take personal responsibility for the results of my actions.					
14.) I seek information from my environment and can identify problem situations.					
Self Confidence					
15.) I am consistently forceful, unhesitant and can articulate verbally.					
16.) I have the ability to deny a personal impulse or needs for the good of an overriding organizational need.					
Spontaneity					
17.) I can communicate my real feelings, both positive and negative when the situation demands it.					
18.) I can maintain high performance and attention to detail while working on a task.					

Note: Adapted from: Ryff (1989), "Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being". Boyatzis (1982), "The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance.

Category 3: Company Related Research

Once the two firms are selected, the student can identify the traits across the marketing mix and discuss the differences and similarities among the mix components between the home market and market being visited. Specific questions to be answered include: What proportion of their total sales are derived internationally?; What products or product lines are sold in international markets?; and What type of position would the student be able to fill for such a firm? These three categories of pre-trip activities can enhance the achievement of the four course objectives defined earlier. In an attempt to measure attainment of the objectives, however, an assessment process must be administered.

COURSE ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

As part of the pre-trip activities, students will be required to complete a questionnaire prior to any of the research activities described earlier. The questionnaire is adapted from the Schuster, et. al. (1998) research, and assesses the cognitive, affective, and behavioral learning domains. Tables 3 through 5 illustrate how these domains can be assessed. The responses from the participants at the pre-research phase should be compared with their responses at the post-research and post-trip phase to assess the cognitive, affective and behavioral learning of the participants

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

In order to prepare business leaders for the 21st century, business practitioners and academicians

agree that business school graduates should have a general knowledge of cultural differences, language fluency and business practices of specific world regions. The format offered for a short-term study abroad program would be a valuable contribution in exposing the undergraduate student to a broad base of international information, thereby strengthening their understanding and appreciation of international marketing activities. It is a program of study that offers undergraduate students the experiential education they need, and provides the faculty member a methodology with which to assess student learning. Moreover, it is a framework that is conducive to continuous improvement initiatives.

Many administrative issues were not addressed in this paper. The interested reader is referred to Gordon and Smith (1992) and Brokaw (1996) for a more in-depth, comprehensive discussion of these issues. Moreover, given that international experiential courses differ among universities with different objectives and a variety of participants, the questionnaires need to be assessed for validity and reliability before they can be considered appropriate for measuring the three learning domains. Additional questions could be developed to assess skills and teaming behaviors in alternative ways.

The format suggested takes advantage of three key trends in marketing and business education. And most important, it provides a critical success factor to students and faculty in international business - looking at different cultures and transferring marketing concepts and strategies from one cultural context to another.

REFERENCES

Albers-Miller, N.D., Prenshaw P.J., & Straughan R.D, (1999). "Student Perceptions of Study Abroad Programs: A Survey of U.S. Colleges and Universities." *Marketing Education Review*, (Spring), 29-36.

Arpan, J. (1993). Curricular and Administrative Considerations - The Cheshire Cat Parable. *Internationalizing Business Education*, edited by S. Tamer Cavusgil, 15-30. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Arpan, J.S., Folks, Jr. W.R., & Kwok, C.C.Y. (1993). *International Business Education In The 1990's: A Global Survey*. St. Louis, MO: American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business.

Boyatzis, R.E. (1982). *The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Brokaw, S.C. (1996). "Planning, Organizing, and Executing Short-Term International Exposures for U.S. Students of Marketing and Business: An Alternative Method." *Marketing Education Review*. (Fall). 87-93,

- Cann, C.W. (2000). "A Case In Point: An Interdisciplinary Approach To The Short Tenn Study-Abroad." *Marketing Education Review*. (Spring), 67-72.
- Cellich, C.B. (1993). The International Trade Centre's Approach to Internationalizing Business Training In Developing Countries, *Internationalizing Business Education*, edited by S. Tamer Cavusgil, 263-73. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Chan, T.S. (1995). "The MBA Trade Mission Program: Toward a More Effective Approach for Teaching International Marketing." *Marketing Education Review*. (Fall), 59-67.
- Cudmore, B.V., & Toncar, M.Y. (2000). "The Overseas Internship Experience." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (April), 54-63,
- Daniels, J.D. (1993). Perspectives on Curriculum: Indiana University. *Internationalizing Business Education*, edited by S. Tamer Cavusgil, 167-83. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.
- Gordon, P., & Smith, D.K. (1992). "Planning, Organizing, and Executing Short Term International Exposures for U.S. Students of Marketing and Business." *Marketing Education Review*. (Spring), 47-53.
- LeClair, D., & Stottiger, B. (1999). "Using an Intensive Living Case in Graduate Marketing Courses: Experiences for and International Project." *Marketing Education Review*. (Fall), 31-40.
- Lundstrom, W.J., White, D.S.I. & Schuster, C.P. (1996). "Internationalizing the Marketing Curriculum: The Professional Marketer's Perspective." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (Summer). 5-16.
- Martin, G.S., Kimball, B., & Bush, K.S. (1998). -Evaluating the Success of Outcomes-Based Education at the Course Level: A Unique Application of the SOCO Scale in a "Professional Selling" Course." *Marketing Education Review*. (Summer). 9-18.
- Moncrief, W.C., & Shipp, S.H., & Lamb, Jr. C.W. (1995). "Student Journal Writing In an International Setting." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (Summer), 71-80.
- Ryff, C.D. (1989). "Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1069-1081.
- Schuster, C.P. (1993). "Planning and Implementing Overseas Travel Classes for Executive MBA Students." *Marketing Education Review*. (Fall), 56-60.
- Schuster, C.P., Zimmerman, R.O., Schertzer, C.B., & Beamish, P.W. (1998). "Assessing the Impact of Executive MBA International Travel Courses." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (August), 121-132.
- Shannon, J.R., & Turley, L.W. (1999). "The International Marketing Curriculum: Views from Students." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (December), 175-180.
- Skousen, K.F., & Bertelson, D.P. (1994). "A Look at Change in Management Education." *SAM Advanced Journal of Management*. (Winter), 13-20.
- Toncar, M.F., & Cudmore, B.V. (2000). "The Overseas Internship Experience." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (April), 54-63.
- Turlev, L.W., & Shannon, J.R. (1999). "The International Marketing Curriculum: Views From Students." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (December). 175-180.
- Tvagi, P.K. (2001). "Internationalization of Marketing Education: Current Status and Future Challenges." *Marketing Education Review*, (Spring). 75-84.
- Wynd, W.R. (1989). "An Experiential Approach to Marketing Education." *Journal of Marketing Education*. (Summer), 64-71,